

Put Christ back into European life

After praying the Angelus with the faithful present at Castelgandolfo on Sunday, July 13, John Paul II spoke of the future of Europe.

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On Sunday, July 13, at noon, in the inner courtyard of the apostolic palace at Castelgandolfo, Pope John Paul recited the Angelus with the faithful present and reflected on the future of Europe where, he said, there appears to be "a certain loss of

Christian memory accompanied by a sort of fear to face the future."

"In this historic moment," the Pope stated, "during which the important process of the reunification of Europe is taking place through the enlargement of the European Union to other countries, the Church looks with love to this continent. Joining the many lights are a number of shadows. A certain loss of the Christian memory is accompanied by a sort of fear to face the future."

He underscored "the spread of individualism and a growing weakness of inter-personal solidarity, and a loss of hope at whose root lies the attempt to make an anthropology without God and Christ prevail. Paradoxically the cradle of human rights risks losing its foundation, eroded by relativism and utilitarianism."

The Holy Father then referred to the Apostolic Exhortation "Ecclesia in Europe," saying that Jesus Christ, Who seems to be disappearing from European life, is urgently needed now, at a time of "serious uncertainties at a cultural, anthropological, ethical and spiritual level."

"European culture," said the Pope, "gives the impression of a 'silent apostasy' on the part of men who are sated, who live as if God did not exist. The greatest urgency, therefore, throughout Europe, 'in the East as in the West, lies in a growing need for hope, to thus be able to give meaning to life and to history and to walk forward together'." Only Christ can give man this hope, he said.

After praying the Angelus, John Paul II greeted the inhabitants of Castelgandolfo, the civil and religious

authorities and the director and personnel of the pontifical villa.

He also noted that "two initiatives aimed at the university world will take place at the end of this week in Rome. The first is a series of sporting and cultural games on the occasion of the seventh centenary of La Sapienza University. The second is the symposium "University and Church in Europe. I cordially greet the participants in anticipation of meeting them next Saturday."

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